

# Four Skinny Trees

Sandra Cisneros

They are the only ones who understand me. I am the only one who understands them. Four skinny trees with skinny necks and pointy elbows like mine. Four who do not belong here but are here. Four raggedy excuses planted by the city. From our room we can hear them, but Nenny just sleeps and doesn't appreciate these things.

Their strength is secret. They send ferocious roots beneath the ground. They grow up and they grow down and grab the earth between their hairy toes and bite the sky with violent teeth and never quit their anger. This is how they keep. ©

10 Let one forget his reason for being, they'd all droop like tulips in a glass, each with their arms around the other. Keep, keep, keep, trees say when I sleep. They teach.

When I am too sad and too skinny to keep keeping, when I am a tiny thing against so many bricks, then it is I look at trees. When there is nothing left to look at on this street. Four who grew despite concrete. Four who reach and do not forget to reach. Four whose only reason is to be and be. ♡ ©

## © MOOD AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Reread lines 1–9. What human qualities do the trees have? What emotion is **personified**?

## © MOOD AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Reread lines 13–17. What words and phrases stand out to you? Consider the **mood** and meaning these words and phrases create.

## Analyze Visuals ►

What feeling or emotion do the colors of this image suggest to you?

1. Underline any repetition for effect.
2. Place hearts above writing that you love.
3. Highlight the images that impact you the most.
4. Circle any parallel structures.
5. What writing technique(s) do you think create the rhythm of this passage?
6. What understands you the best? On the back of this paper, write a passage of emotion in no more than 150 words that describes the relationship you have with this inanimate object or being. Be sure to mimic some of the same techniques shown in this excerpt so that you show good traits of writing as well.